



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Quetiapine

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

### **Brand Names: US**

SEROquel; SEROquel XR

### **Brand Names: Canada**

Seroquel; Seroquel XR

### **Warning**

- There is a higher chance of death in older adults who take this drug for mental problems caused by dementia. Most of the deaths were linked to heart disease or infection. This drug is not approved to treat mental problems caused by dementia.
- Drugs like this one have raised the chance of suicidal thoughts or actions in children and young adults. The risk may be greater in people who have had these thoughts or actions in the past. All people who take this drug need to be watched closely. Call the doctor right away if signs like low mood (depression), nervousness, restlessness, grouchiness,

panic attacks, or changes in mood or actions are new or worse. Call the doctor right away if any thoughts or actions of suicide occur.

- This drug is not approved for use in children younger than 10 years of age. Talk with the doctor.

### **What is this drug used for?**

- It is used to treat schizophrenia.
- It is used to treat bipolar problems.
- It is used to treat low mood (depression).
- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

### **What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?**

- If your child has an allergy to this drug or any part of this drug.
- If your child is allergic to any drugs like this one or any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If your child has ever had a long QT on ECG or other heartbeat that is not normal.
- If your child has any of these health problems: Low potassium or magnesium levels.

- If your child is taking any drugs that can cause a certain type of heartbeat that is not normal (prolonged QT interval). There are many drugs that can do this. Ask the doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.

### **If your child is breast-feeding a baby:**

- Talk with the doctor if your child is breast-feeding a baby or plans to breast-feed a baby.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell the doctor and pharmacist about all of your child's drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for your child to take this drug with all of his/her drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug your child takes without checking with the doctor.

### **What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?**

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Have your child's blood work checked often. Talk with your child's doctor.
- Have your child avoid tasks or actions that call for alertness until you see how this drug affects your child. These are

things like riding a bike, playing sports, or using items such as scissors, lawnmowers, electric scooters, toy cars, or motorized vehicles.

- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, have your child rise slowly if your child has been sitting or lying down. Have your child be careful going up and down stairs.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your child's health care providers and lab workers that your child takes this drug.
- Do not stop giving this drug to your child all of a sudden without calling the doctor. Your child may have a greater risk of signs of withdrawal. If your child needs to stop this drug, you will want to slowly stop it as ordered by the doctor.
- Alcohol may interact with this drug. Be sure your child does not drink alcohol.
- Talk with the doctor before giving your child other drugs and natural products that may slow your child's actions.
- Cataracts may rarely happen.
- Get your child an eye exam as you have been told by the doctor.
- High blood sugar or diabetes, high cholesterol, and weight gain have happened with drugs like this one. These changes may raise the chance of heart and brain blood vessel disease. Talk with the doctor.

- Have your child's blood sugar checked as you have been told by your child's doctor.
- Low white blood cell counts have happened with drugs like this one. This may lead to a higher chance of getting an infection. Deadly infections have rarely happened. Tell the doctor if your child has ever had a low white blood cell count. Call the doctor right away if your child has signs of infection like fever, chills, or sore throat. Talk with the doctor.
- Dizziness, sleepiness, and feeling less stable may happen with this drug. These may lead to falling. Broken bones or other health problems can happen from falling. Talk with the doctor.
- Have your child be careful in hot weather or while your child is being active. Have your child drink lots of fluids to stop fluid loss.
- Use with care in children. Talk with the doctor.
- High blood pressure has happened in children and teenagers. Have your child's blood pressure checked as you have been told by your child's doctor.
- It is common to have constipation with this drug. Sometimes, bowel block has happened. Rarely, bowel block has been deadly in people taking this drug with other drugs that slow movement through the GI (gastrointestinal) tract. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.

## **If your child is pregnant:**

- Tell the doctor if your child is pregnant or becomes pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of your child using this drug while pregnant.
- Taking this drug in the third trimester of pregnancy may lead to muscle movements that cannot be controlled and withdrawal in the newborn. Talk with the doctor.

## **What are some side effects that I need to call my child's doctor about right away?**

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of low thyroid levels like constipation; not able to handle cold; memory problems; mood changes; or a burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Signs of high blood sugar like confusion, feeling sleepy, more thirst, more hungry, passing urine more often, flushing, fast breathing, or breath that smells like fruit.

- Very bad dizziness or passing out.
- Very bad headache.
- A heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- Chest pain or pressure or a fast heartbeat.
- Trouble controlling body movements, twitching, change in balance, trouble swallowing or speaking.
- Shakiness, trouble moving around, or stiffness.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Drooling.
- Seizures.
- Change in eyesight.
- Very bad belly pain.
- Very bad constipation.
- Trouble passing urine.
- Flu-like signs.
- Enlarged breasts.
- Nipple discharge.
- A very bad and sometimes deadly health problem called neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS) may happen. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has any fever, muscle cramps or stiffness, dizziness, very bad headache, confusion, change in thinking, fast heartbeat, heartbeat that does not feel normal, or is sweating a lot.

- Some people who take this drug may get a very bad muscle problem called tardive dyskinesia. This muscle problem may not go away even if this drug is stopped. Sometimes, signs may lessen or go away over time after this drug is stopped. The risk of tardive dyskinesia may be greater in people with diabetes and in older adults, especially older women. The risk is also greater the longer your child takes this drug or with higher doses. Muscle problems may also occur after short-term use with low doses. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has trouble controlling body movements or if your child has muscle problems with his/her tongue, face, mouth, or jaw like tongue sticking out, puffing cheeks, mouth puckering, or chewing.

### **If your child has menstrual periods:**

- For females, no period.

### **If your child is or may be sexually active:**

- Not able to get or keep an erection.

### **What are some other side effects of this drug?**

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

- Dizziness.
- Headache.



- Feeling nervous and excitable.
- Constipation.
- Dry mouth.
- Feeling sleepy.
- More hungry.
- Weight gain.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Belly pain.
- Back pain.
- Stuffy nose.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your child's doctor. Call your child's doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

### **How is this drug best given?**

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

### **Regular-release tablets:**

- Give this drug with or without food.

### **Extended-release tablets:**

- Have your child swallow whole. Do not let your child chew, break, or crush.
- Give on an empty stomach or with a light meal.

### **All products:**

- To gain the most benefit, do not miss giving your child doses.
- Keep giving this drug to your child as you have been told by your child's doctor or other health care provider, even if your child feels well.
- Have your child drink lots of noncaffeine liquids unless told to drink less liquid by your child's doctor.

### **What do I do if my child misses a dose?**

- Give a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your child's next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your child's normal time.
- Do not give 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.
- If you are not sure what to do if you miss giving your child a dose, call the doctor.

### **How do I store and/or throw out this drug?**

- Store at room temperature.
- Protect from light.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

## **General drug facts**

- If your child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Keep a list of all your child's drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your child's doctor.
- Talk with your child's doctor before giving your child any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it

happened.

## **Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer**

This information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

## **Last Reviewed Date**

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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